P.S. to the NEWS
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LOU BROCK

To the true baseball fan, the most exciting moment is not the home run but the stolen base. When a leading base stealer such as Lou Brock gets on base, tension and excitement fill the air. All the participants in the coming drama, the pitcher, the catcher, the first and second basemen, and the runner, know they have important parts to play.

Great base stealers steal off the pitcher, not off the catcher. Lou Brock in particular has made a deep study of each pitcher's body rhythm. A mathmetics major in college, Brock has carefully worked out the time and distance equations he must beat in order to arrive on base ahead of the ball. He studies a pitcher until he can "read" him like a book. According to Brock, "a pitcher's motion is mechanical. He cannot alter it without risking injury to his arm."

In 1915, the great Ty Cobb set a record of 96 stolen bases in one season. Fans thought this record would last even longer than Babe Ruth's home run record. It lasted 47 years and until 1962 when Maury Wills stole 104 bases.

By July 22 of this year, Lou Brock of the St. Louis Cardinals had stolen 60 bases. This puts him well ahead of the number either Cobb or Wills had stolen on that date. Brock also has a chance to become the all-time base stealer in National League history, beating Max Carey's record of 738, established from 1910-29.

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Now come the crucial two months. As soon as Brock gets on base, everyone expects him to steal. Opposing pitchers and catchers seem more disposed to stop Brock than to get the batter out. Pitch-outs are thrown to give the catcher a split second advantage in releasing the ball. Pick-off plays are set up to catch Brock off first base or to cut down his lead. Keeping Brock from stealing almost seems more important than winning the game.

Lou Brock's extra-base hitting ability puts him at a disadvantage with Ty Cobb and Maury Wills. Because Brock hits many doubles and some triples instead of singles, he has fewer opportunities to steal second, which is the easier base.

It is amazing that Brock's opportunity to break the stolen base record comes when he is age 35. Running speed records are seldom set by athletes past 30. Brock has kept himself in magnificent condition and seems as fast at 35 as when he came to the big leagues some 13 years ago. Maury Wills says that "Brock is the youngest 35 year old I've ever seen. He's just as young at 35 as I was at 30."

Lou Brock is not only a great athlete. He is one of St. Louis' most distinguished citizens. Off season he is tireless in donating his time to many charitable, civic and patriotic enterprises. Always modest and gracious, he is first in the hearts of St. Louis fans who are hoping and praying that he breaks the big league base-stealing record this season.

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